

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) Method—A method of patenting at least one steel wire, comprising the steps of:

- a rise in temperature of the heating said at least one steel wire up to to an austenitisation temperature of the of steel,

- ejecting pressurised gas bubbles into a mass of cooling liquid, in a manner which is guided upwards, and entraining said cooling liquid by said bubbles in a form of at least one cooling liquid curtain with an upward turbulent flow,

- abruptly an abrupt cooling said at least one wire, in a liquid medium, of the said at least one wire in said cooling liquid which has reached the said said austenitisation temperature, by passing the said said at least one steel wire through said at least one cooling liquid curtain in which the latter exhibits a,

the at least one cooling liquid curtain exhibiting said upward turbulent flow being oriented substantially transversely to the said said at least one moving wire, with the while obtaining of a cooling a cooling temperature situated below the austenitisation temperature and above the martensitie a martensitic transformation temperature,

- adjusting a successive number of the cooling liquid curtains, the number being determined so as to obtain, by the said cooling said wire in said cooling liquid, a perlitic transformation temperature to be maintained during a step of maintaining said at least one wire in an isothermal state, as the cooling temperature; and

- ~~an isothermal maintenance of the~~ performing the step of maintaining said at least one steel wire in the isothermal state ~~at a~~ ~~at the~~ perlitic transformation temperature ~~up to the end of this~~ until completion of a perlitic transformation,

~~characterised in that it also comprises~~

~~an adjustment of a number of above mentioned successive curtains which is determined so as to obtain, by the said cooling in a liquid medium, the said perlitic transformation temperature to be maintained during the isothermal maintenance step, as the above mentioned cooling temperature, and~~

wherein the above mentioned isothermal maintenance step of maintaining said at least one steel wire in the isothermal state is performed directly following the step of cooling in a in the cooling liquid medium.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) Method ~~The method~~ according to Claim 2, ~~characterised in that~~ claim 1, wherein the upward turbulent ~~flow~~ flowing cooling liquid curtains have a top, and in that the method also ~~comprises~~, comprising the step of:

passing said at least one steel wire through the cooling liquid curtains as the cooling liquid falls from the said ~~the said~~ top and along at least ~~on one~~ one ~~one~~ side of each of rising ~~the~~

upward flowing turbulent flow curtain cooling liquid curtains, a fall of liquid with turbulent flow through which the said at least one steel wire also passes.

4. (Currently Amended) Method The according to Claim 3, characterised in that above-mentioned falls of wherein the falling cooling liquid with the turbulent flow liquid coming from the top the tops of two above-mentioned two successive upward flowing turbulent cooling liquid curtains cross each other at least partially where the in positions where said at least one steel wire passes.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) Method The method according to claim 1, characterised in that wherein the cooling liquid is water.

7. (Currently Amended) Method The method according to claim 1, characterised in that wherein the wires to be patented have a cross-section with a diameter of less than 15 mm.

8. (Currently Amended) Method The method according to claim 1, characterised in that wherein the pressure of the gas bubbles is greater than a column formed by the mass of cooling liquid.

9. (Currently Amended) Device-A device for implementing the method according to claim 1, comprising

- a furnace (25) ~~for~~ for austenitising ~~the~~ said said at least one steel wire,
- means (23, 24) ~~of~~ for driving ~~the~~ said said at least one steel wire (3, 26) in movement,
- means (7-9, 14, 15, 16) ~~of~~ for spraying ~~at least one curtain of~~ for ejecting pressurised gas bubbles into said cooling liquid in a manner which is guided upwardly and for entraining said cooling liquid by said bubbles in the form of the at least one cooling liquid curtain which the latter has a,
the upward turbulent flow of the at least one cooling liquid curtain being oriented substantially transversely to the said said at least one moving wire, in order to cool the at least one moving wire latter in a in the cooling liquid curtains medium to the to said cooling temperature situated below the austenitisation temperature and above the martensitic transformation temperature, and

- a tank containing the cooling liquid and the means of ejecting said pressurised gas bubbles into the cooling liquid, the tank being disposed below said at least one moving wire,
- means for adjusting a number of successive cooling liquid curtains through which said at least one moving wire passes in order to reach said perlitic transformation temperature, by way of said cooling temperature,

- a temperature maintenance chamber (31) ~~for~~ for the wires which have reached the said perlitic transformation temperature,
~~characterised in that it also comprises~~
~~means (22) of adjusting the number of successive curtains of cooling liquid to be passed through by the said at least one moving wire in order to reach the said perlitic transformation temperature, by way of cooling temperature, and~~
- ~~an arrangement of wherein~~ the temperature maintenance chamber is arranged directly ~~at the~~ at an exit from the at least one cooling liquid curtain situated furthest downstream with respect to the movement of ~~the said~~ said at least one wire.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) Device—A device according to Claim 10 Claim 9, ~~characterised in that it also comprises~~ the device further comprising:
~~, above the said at least one moving wire,~~
~~- deflector means (20, 21) disposed above said at least one moving wire which divert for diverting the upward turbulent flow of the above mentioned flowing cooling liquid curtains towards at least one side of each curtain of the curtains so as to form from there at least one turbulent flow fall of the cooling liquid through which the said said at least one steel wire passes.~~

12. (Currently Amended) Device—A device according to ~~claim 10~~ claim 9,
~~characterised in that~~ wherein the temperature maintenance chamber (31) ~~is~~ is mounted so as
to be able to move horizontally over the ~~tank (1)~~ tank according to the number of liquid
curtains in service.